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190
JAN
DAREDEVIL®
MILLER

prologue

UNBIDDEN, HER THOUGHTS RETURN TO **MATT** --AND WHAT SHE HAS DONE TO HIM.

HE IS SUFFERING, SHE KNOWS. BUT HE IS STRONG. AND HIS LOVE FOR HIS WORLD IS EVEN GREATER THAN HIS LOVE FOR HER.

FOR THE THOUSANDTH TIME, SHE WONDERS WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN--HAD NOT THE DREAM THEY SHARED BEEN **MURDERED**, AN ETERNITY AGO.

BUT THAT IS BEHIND HER, NOW.

ALL SHE HAS LEFT IS A NAKED **PURPOSE**--MORE DRIVING AND RUTHLESS THAN EVEN THE GALE FORCE **WIND** THAT THREATENS TO TOPPLE HER BACKWARD INTO THE SNOW.

THE WIND CANNOT STOP HER. NOR CAN THE KNOT IN HER STOMACH THAT HAD BEEN **HUNGER**--NOR THE LANCING **PAIN** IN HER THIGHS --NOR THE MORE FRIGHTENING **NUMBNESS** IN HER FEET.

SHE IS **ELEKTRA**-- AND SHE WILL NOT DIE TODAY.

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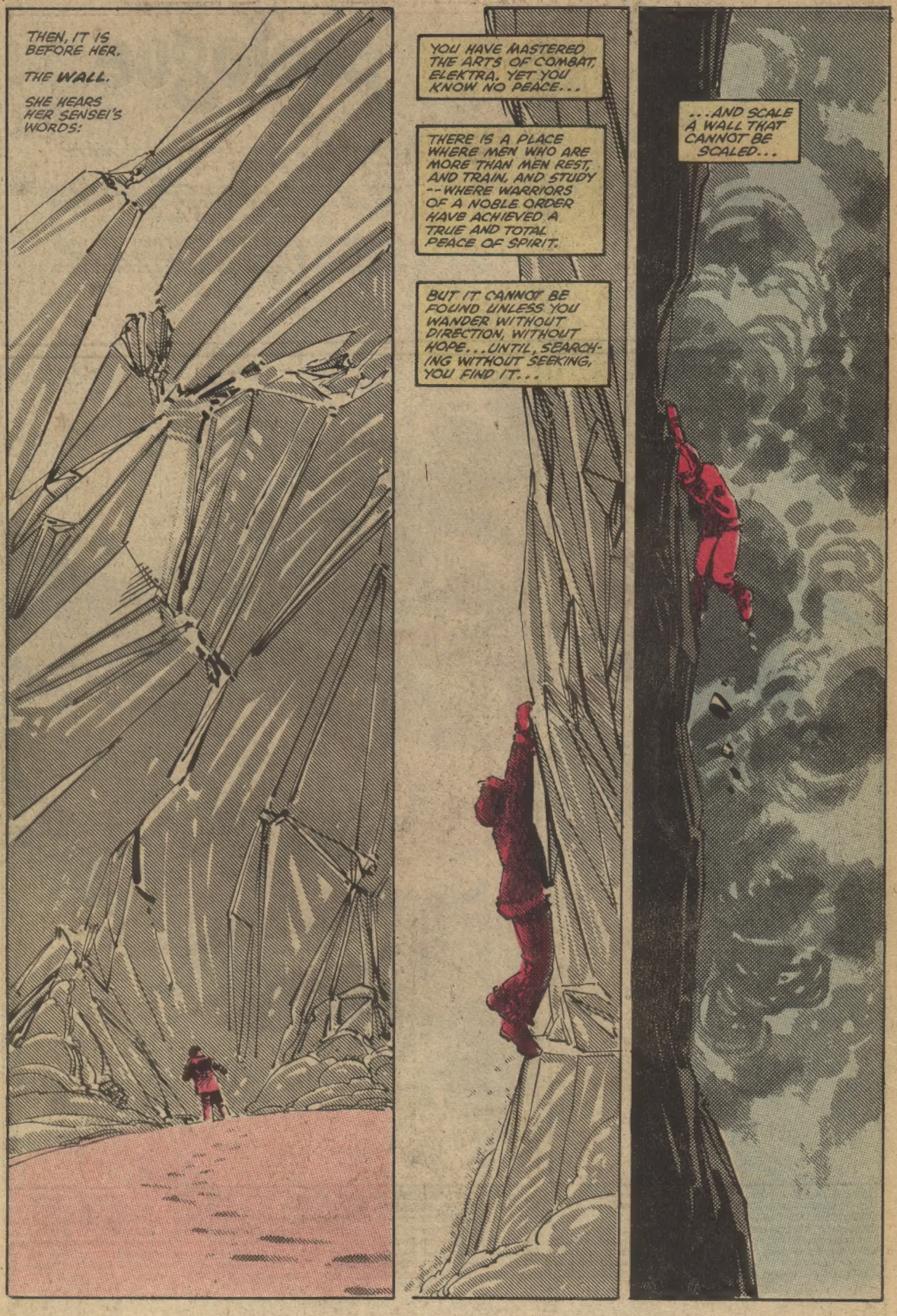
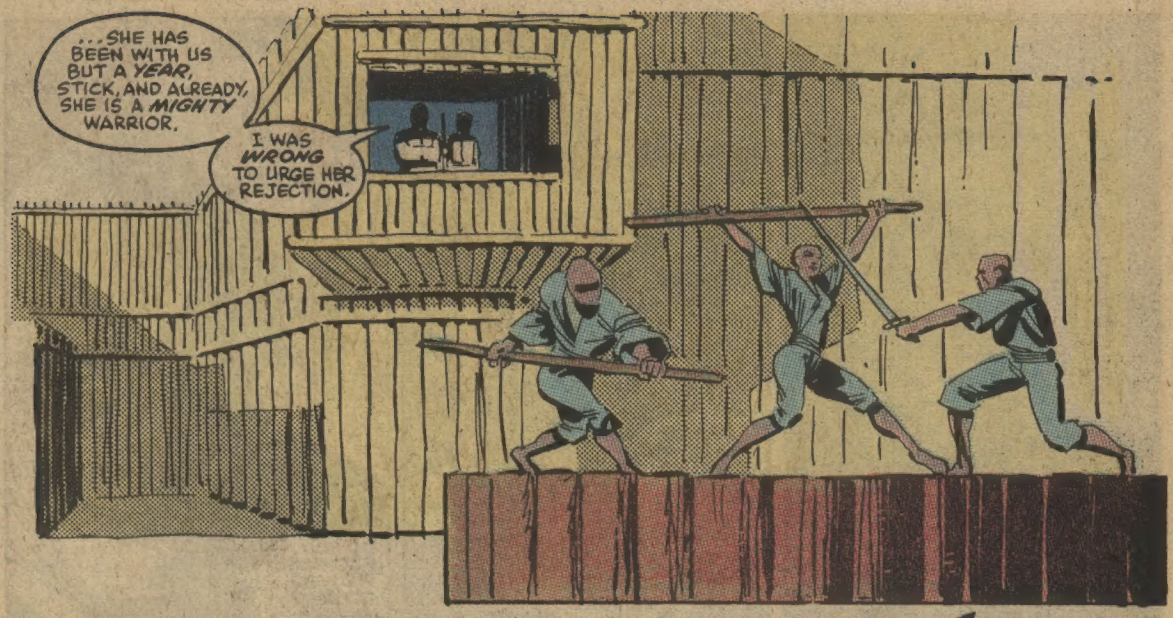
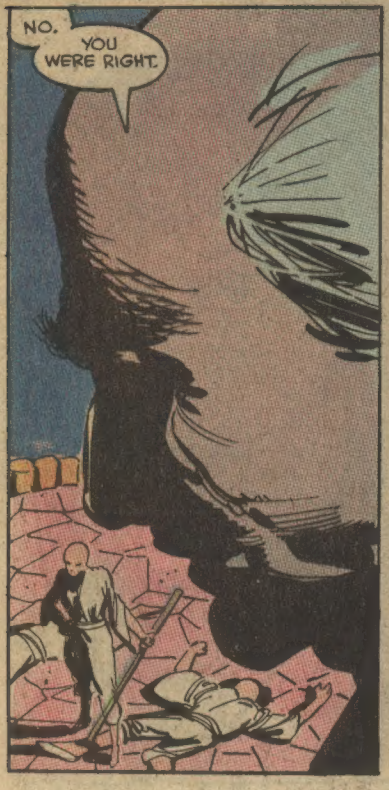

THEN, IT IS BEFORE HER.
THE WALL.
SHE HEARS HER SENSEI'S WORDS:
YOU HAVE MASTERED THE ARTS OF COMBAT, ELEKTRA, YET YOU KNOW NO PEACE...
THERE IS A PLACE WHERE MEN WHO ARE MORE THAN MEN REST, AND TRAIN, AND STUDY --WHERE WARRIORS OF A NOBLE ORDER HAVE ACHIEVED A TRUE AND TOTAL PEACE OF SPIRIT.
BUT IT CANNOT BE FOUND UNLESS YOU WANDER WITHOUT DIRECTION, WITHOUT HOPE...UNTIL, SEARCHING WITHOUT SEEKING, YOU FIND IT...
...AND SCALE A WALL THAT CANNOT BE SCALED...

KNOW, ELEKTRA, THAT ALL YOUR RAGE AND WILLFULNESS ARE AS NOTHING AGAINST THE HAMMERING WIND AND THE UNFORGIVING WALL...
KNOW THAT YOU ARE NOTHING...

...FAILED THE CLIMB, STICK. WE SHOULD NOT HAVE BROUGHT HER HERE.
SHE DOESN'T BELONG--
SHADDUP. SHE'S COMING AROUND.
DO YOU KNOW WHO WE ARE, TOOTS? WHAT WE ARE?
NO.
BUT I WANT TO BE ONE OF YOU.


...SHE HAS BEEN WITH US BUT A *YEAR*, STICK, AND ALREADY, SHE IS A *MIGHTY* WARRIOR.
I WAS *WRONG* TO URGE HER REJECTION.

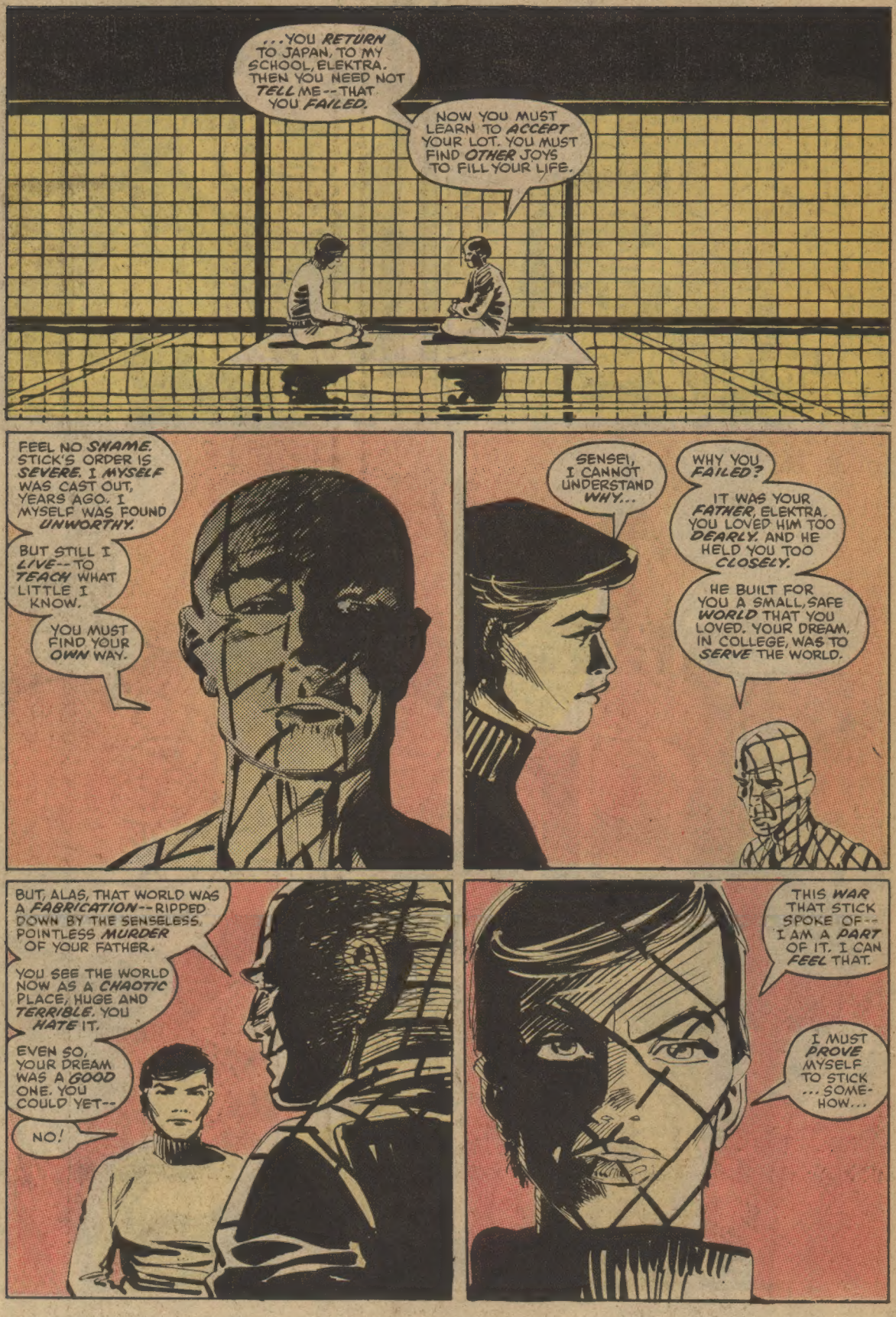
WHOK
WHUKK

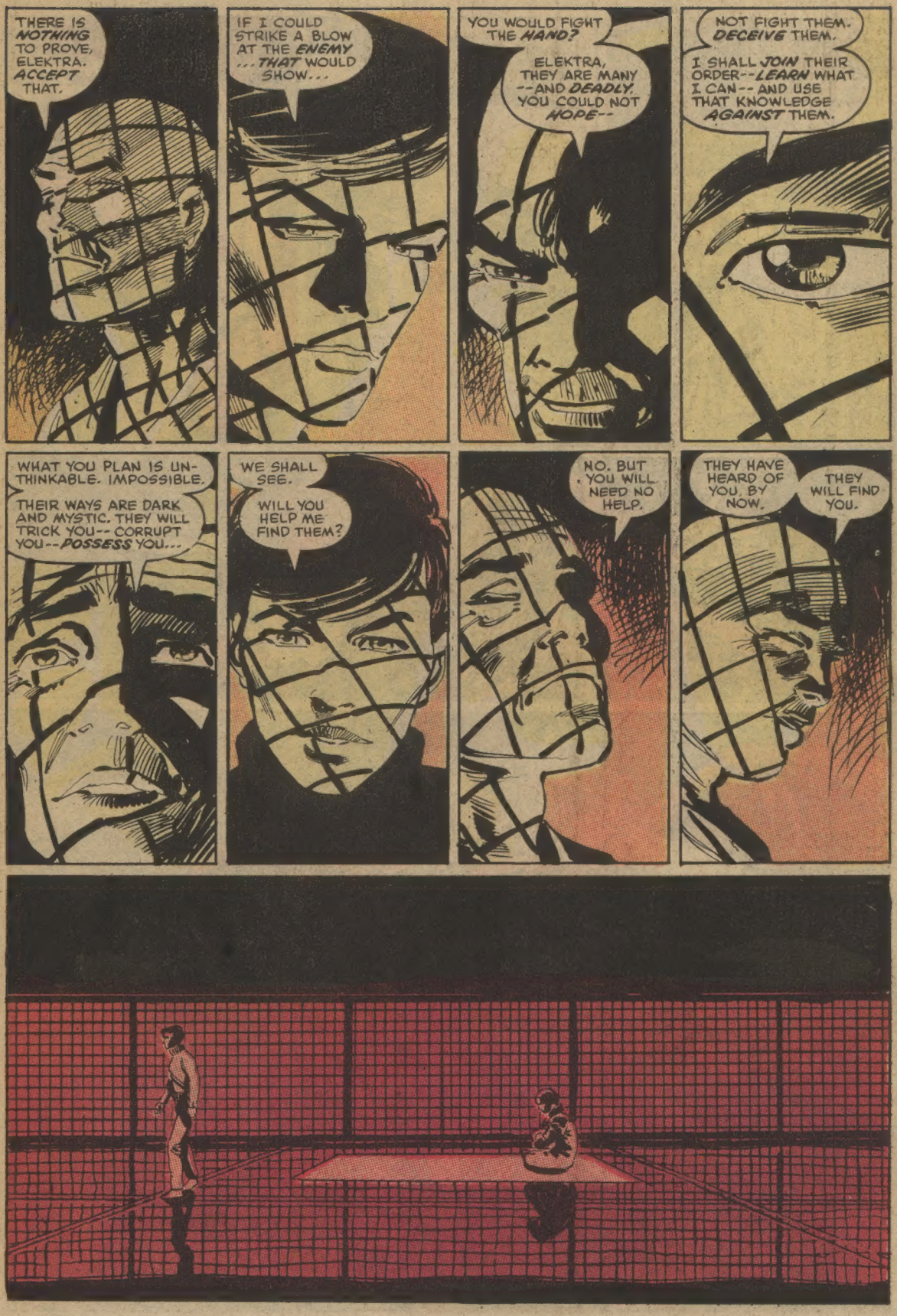

NO. YOU WERE RIGHT.

THIS IS *WONDERFUL*, STICK!
THIS *PLACE*-- SOMEHOW, IT GIVES ME *STRENGTH*-- *POWER*...
YOU GOTTA *LEAVE*, ELEKTRA.

A *MISSION*? I KNEW THAT THIS ORDER SERVED SOME *PURPOSE* IN THE WORLD--
--BUT I NEVER *DREAMED* THAT I WOULD BE READY SO *SOON*...
TEACHER?

NO MISSION.
JUST LEAVE. YOU DON'T BELONG WITH US.
BUT--I HAVE GIVEN YOU MY ALL. I AM AS SKILLED AS ANY OF YOU!
YOU AIN'T CLEAN.
YER FULL OF PAIN--AND HATE.
ALL YOU'VE LEARNED IS HOW TO USE THE PAIN.
THERE'S NO PLACE FOR YOU HERE. SO GO.
STICK--PERHAPS WITH TIME, SHE...
HER WOUNDS ARE JUST TOO DEEP, STONE.
WHATEVER HAPPENED TO HER DOWN THERE--SHE CAN'T SHAKE IT.
WE ARE IN A WAR, STICK. IF WE LOSE HER--
WE NEVER HAD HER, NOT FER A SECOND.
BUT--THE ENEMY--THEY MIGHT ENLIST HER...
YEAH.
THEY MIGHT.


...YOU RETURN TO JAPAN, TO MY SCHOOL, ELEKTRA. THEN YOU NEED NOT TELL ME--THAT YOU FAILED.
NOW YOU MUST LEARN TO ACCEPT YOUR LOT. YOU MUST FIND OTHER JOYS TO FILL YOUR LIFE.
FEEL NO SHAME. STICK'S ORDER IS SEVERE. I MYSELF WAS CAST OUT, YEARS AGO. I MYSELF WAS FOUND UNWORTHY.
BUT STILL I LIVE--TO TEACH WHAT LITTLE I KNOW.
YOU MUST FIND YOUR OWN WAY.
SENSEI, I CANNOT UNDERSTAND WHY...
WHY YOU FAILED?
IT WAS YOUR FATHER, ELEKTRA. YOU LOVED HIM TOO DEARLY, AND HE HELD YOU TOO CLOSELY.
HE BUILT FOR YOU A SMALL, SAFE WORLD THAT YOU LOVED. YOUR DREAM, IN COLLEGE, WAS TO SERVE THE WORLD.
BUT, ALAS, THAT WORLD WAS A FABRICATION--RIPPED DOWN BY THE SENSELESS, POINTLESS MURDER OF YOUR FATHER.
YOU SEE THE WORLD NOW AS A CHAOTIC PLACE, HUGE AND TERRIBLE. YOU HATE IT.
EVEN SO, YOUR DREAM WAS A GOOD ONE. YOU COULD YET--
NO!
THIS WAR THAT STICK SPOKE OF--I AM A PART OF IT. I CAN FEEL THAT.
I MUST PROVE MYSELF TO STICK ...SOMEHOW...


THERE IS NOTHING TO PROVE, ELEKTRA. ACCEPT THAT.
IF I COULD STRIKE A BLOW AT THE ENEMY ...THAT WOULD SHOW...
YOU WOULD FIGHT THE HAND?
ELEKTRA, THEY ARE MANY --AND DEADLY. YOU COULD NOT HOPE--
NOT FIGHT THEM. DECEIVE THEM.
I SHALL JOIN THEIR ORDER--LEARN WHAT I CAN--AND USE THAT KNOWLEDGE AGAINST THEM.
WHAT YOU PLAN IS UNTHINKABLE. IMPOSSIBLE.
THEIR WAYS ARE DARK AND MYSTIC. THEY WILL TRICK YOU--CORRUPT YOU--POSSESS YOU...
WE SHALL SEE.
WILL YOU HELP ME FIND THEM?
NO. BUT YOU WILL NEED NO HELP.
THEY HAVE HEARD OF YOU, BY NOW.
THEY WILL FIND YOU.

PITY ELEKTRA. THOUGH SHE IS COURAGEOUS, SHE IS YOUNG...
...AND INNOCENT IN THE WAYS OF EVIL MEN...
NNGG!
URRKK!
WOULD ONE OF YOU PLEASE HAND ME MY CLOTHES?

THE STONE IS SLIMY BENEATH HER FEET. HER NOSTRILS ARE FILLED WITH THE SEWER'S STENCH. BUT ELEKTRA'S MIND IS NOT HERE. IN THE SANCTUARY OF THE HAND...
SHE THINKS OF A PROUD, CRUEL CLIFF, CAPPED BY SNOW THAT HAS NEVER BEEN TOUCHED BY A SINGLE SHADOW...
YOU ARE ELEKTRA, YES?
WE HAVE WATCHED YOU, ELEKTRA. YOUR TALENTS ARE MANY FOR ONE SO... LOVELY...
BUT WE DO NOT SPEAK OF BEAUTY HERE. OH, NO.
WE OFFER YOU POSITION-- EMPLOYMENT. THIS ROBE...
THE ROBE OF A COMMON GENIN?
I AM INSULTED.
THEN THE RUMOR IS TRUE?
YOU TRAINED WITH STICK?
I DID.
BUT HIS WAY IS SOFT. SLOW.
AND HARDLY PROFITABLE.
SO. YOU COME TO THE HAND.
WE REQUIRE A TEST--
OF COURSE.
DOWN THERE.

WHOK
KRAK

SHHKK
SENSEI...!
NO...
HE WAS DIFFICULT TO CATCH, YES.
BUT, ONCE DRUGGED, HE SERVED HIS PURPOSE.
WELCOME, ELEKTRA. WELCOME TO THE HAND.
SENSEI...
SHE DOES NOT SCREAM. SHE THINKS ONLY OF A CLIFF SHE WILL NEVER CLIMB.
A PEACE SHE WILL NEVER KNOW...

ELEKTRA SERVED THE HAND FOR A TIME, THEN BROKE AWAY, TO BECOME A MERCENARY, A BOUNTY HUNTER.
SHE NEVER SOUGHT OUT OUR ORDER AGAIN. HER SENSEI'S PREDICTION PROVED ACCURATE--
--AS CONTACT WITH THE HAND MADE HER A TWISTED SOUL.
SHE WAS NEVER TOTALLY EVIL, STONE. I CAN'T BELIEVE SHE WAS.
NO. HER LOVE FOR YOU, MATTHEW MURDOCK, WAS HER WEAKNESS. SHE FOUGHT A WAR WITH HERSELF-- AND LOST. SHE WAS SLAIN, BY A RIVAL ASSASSIN...
...AND BURIED HERE, IN NEW YORK. BUT NOW YOU SAY THE HAND WANTS TO DIG HER UP--
--AND BRING HER BACK TO LIFE?
IT IS IN THEIR POWER-- NO STRANGER THAN THE THOUGHT-SPEAK WE NOW EMPLOY.
I AM THE LAST OF MY KIND. STICK, THE REST-- ARE GONE. THE HAND WILL USE ELEKTRA-- TO ELIMINATE ME.
SO WE MUST DESTROY HER BODY, BEFORE--
THEY'RE HERE!
YES.
BUT LET THEM BEGIN THE EXHUMATION. WE WANT THEM AT THEIR LEAST WARY.
THEY'RE DIGGING--
ANOTHER MOMENT...
NOW.

STAN LEE PRESENTS
RESURRECTION
STARRING
DAREDEVIL
THE MAN WITHOUT FEAR!
THEY ATTACK-- AS THE JONIN SAID THEY WOULD.
THEN -- THE TRAP IS SPRUNG!

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WE HAVE THEM! THEY--
DO IT, NATASHA!
FOP FOP FOP
HAVE FUN, BOYS!
ONE GOOD THING ABOUT BEING BLIND-- TEAR GAS CAN'T MAKE ME ANY BLINDER.
NOW LET'S FIND OUT WHAT MY OTHER HEIGHTENED SENSES CAN DO.
MY HEARING READS A HEARTBEAT...
...HERE!
WHUDD
WHOK
AND MY BUILT-IN RADAR GIVES ME TWO MORE--HERE...
...AND HERE!
WHOK
WHUP WHUP
THAT SOUND-- WHAT...
HU

IT'S A HELICOPTER! THAT'S HOW THEY'RE MOVING THE BODY!
IF STONE CAN'T CATCH UP WITH THEM, BEFORE THEY--
THEY HAVE HER!
AT LEAST WE'RE STILL ALIVE.
THANKS TO OUR ACE-IN-THE-HOLE...
NATASHA...THE BLACK WIDOW ...JET-SET SUPERSPY...
IDIOT! AMATEUR!
YOU PRATTLE LIKE A CHILD-- WHILE WE SUFFER DEFEAT AFTER DEFEAT!
I...I AM SORRY. IT WAS MY PLAN THAT LOST THIS DAY FOR US. I SHOULD NOT REPRIMAND YOU...
I HAVE FOUGHT IN THIS WAR FOR TOO LONG... I AM WEARY...

MAN, AM I BUSHED!
WHERE'S LUCAS, ANYWAY?
DUNNO. SHOULD'VE RELIEVED US TEN MINUTES AGO.
NUTS. I OUGHTTA PUT HIM ON REPORT.
COOL YER JETS. THE KINGPIN'D HAVE HIS HEAD.
BESIDES, WHAT'S TEN MINUTES IN A MAN'S--
URRGH!
FUP
FUP
...RIGHT, KINGPIN. YER THE BOSS.
I'LL RUN RIGHT--
HEY!
WHAT'RE YOU--
AHGGG
FUP
YOU'RE DEAD, KINGPIN.

WHUMP
WHO SENT YOU? QUICKLY.
I AIN'T ...AHGG
IT WAS INJUN JOE...
THANK YOU.
SNAP
BOSS-- I HEARD SHOTS! AND LOUIE, HE'S DEAD! WHAT'S...
WE HAVE TROUBLE, FLINT.
MUTINY.
MY CONTROL OVER THE EAST COAST MOBS IS SLIPPING. WE MUST DEMONSTRATE TO THEM THAT I AM NOT TO BE TRIFLED WITH--
--WE MUST MAKE THEM AWARE OF HOW VERY MUCH THEY NEED ME.
I GOT LINES OUT FOR A NEW ENFORCER...
KEEP THOSE LINES OUT, FLINT.
I SHALL TRY TO FORMULATE ANOTHER SOLUTION...

BUT YOU TRIED BEFORE, MURDOCK.
YOU COULD NOT FIND WHERE THE NINJA HIDE.
I COULDN'T FIND THEM BY MYSELF.
SO I'M GETTING HELP.
BUT WHO--?
HE'S GONE!
I'M WORRIED ABOUT HIM, STONE.
YOU SHOULD BE.
HE IS AN ODD ONE.
JUST AS STICK REJECTED ELEKTRA, SO HE COULD NOT ENLIST DAREDEVIL--
--THE ADVENTURER CANNOT CONTROL HIS PASSIONS.
EMOTIONS ARE DANGEROUS TO US IN THIS STRUGGLE. I FEAR HIS MAY BE NOT ENOUGH...TO MAKE HIM BETRAY US.
HE LOVED ELEKTRA. HE MAY STILL CARRY HER IN HIS HEART.
WHEN THE TIME COMES--IF COME IT DOES--CAN WE COUNT ON HIS AID? WILL HE HELP US STOP HER RESURRECTION?
OR WILL HE BECOME OUR ENEMY?
HE'S A GOOD MAN, STONE.
ELEKTRA
YES. PERHAPS STICK COULD HAVE TAUGHT HIM THE WAY. BUT STICK IS DEAD.
AND I GROW OLD.
AND THERE IS NO ONE TO REPLACE ME...

...ALWAYS THOUGHT YOU WERE A BIT UNSTABLE, DAREDEVIL.
IT IS SAD TO SEE YOU GO INSANE. YOU WERE AN ENTERTAINING FOE.
I'M SERIOUS, KINGPIN.
IF I CAN'T FIND THE HIDEOUT OF THE HAND -- AND SOON -- ELEKTRA WILL BE BROUGHT BACK TO LIFE!
PREPOSTEROUS.
BUT EVEN IF IT WERE SO -- WHO AM I TO WISH OTHERWISE?
I HAVE BEEN TRYING TO FILL HER POSITION IN MY ORGANIZATION EVER SINCE SHE DIED.
IF SHE RETURNS, SHE'LL SERVE THE HAND.
WILL YOU FIND THEM FOR ME?
YES...
...BUT THERE IS SOMETHING YOU MUST DO FOR ME, IN RETURN...

...DON'T LIKE THIS, TURK. I MEAN, S'POSE THE KINGPIN WUZN'T KILLED? WHEN HE COMES DOWN ON SOME-BODY, HE COMES DOWN HARD.
AN' INJUN JOE, HE'S GONE AND...
SHADDUP, GROTTO.
GOT YOU OUTTA THE SLAMMER, DIDN'T HE?
I JUST SORTA TAGGED ALONG WHEN HE SPRUNG HISSELF. IS ALL. DON'T MEAN I GOTTA STAND GUARD...
AW, NO...
EASY, GROTTO. I'LL HANDLE THIS.
NICE NIGHT, HUH?
NICE NIGHT.
SPOK
HOW MANY IN THE WAREHOUSE?
INJUN JOE AND FOUR.
THEY GOT GUNS.
THEY ALWAYS DO.

KRAK
CLUDD
DAREDEVIL?!
WOK
YOU'RE FINISHED, HORNHEAD!
KRAK
NOT TONIGHT.
CHUDD
THE POLICE GET THESE MEN, AS AGREED.
SURE. AND THE KINGPIN SAYS 'THANKS.'
'THANKS. I DON'T NEED.
THE ADDRESS--
SURE.
IT'S AN ABANDONED CHURCH...

THE OINTMENTS ARE APPLIED.
BEGIN.
LET YOUR LIFE'S BLOOD FLOW TO HER. ELEKTRA MUST LIVE-- TO SERVE THE HAND.
AND SERVE US SHE SHALL. THOUGH SHE WAS DIFFICULT TO CONTROL--THOUGH SHE ABANDONED OUR CAUSE--
--THIS CEREMONY SHALL MAKE HER OURS. FOREVER.
NOW, MY BROTHERS. IT IS TIME.
EMPTY YOUR SOULS TO ELEKTRA...
YOUR BLOOD IS HERS...
YOUR LIVES-- YOUR FLESH-- HERS...
AH...
SHE IS CLOSE...

FOOLS!
WE ARE PREPARED. WE ARE MANY.
THEY SURE ARE.
JOINT'S CRAWLING WITH THEM.
THEN-- LET THEM BURN.
FOMP
NO!
NOT NOW!

WHOOM
THAT WILL SLOW THEM...
...LONG ENOUGH...
HE FIGURED THERE'D BE ARCHERS IN THE RAFTERS.
STONE'S A SHARD GUY.
SO HE SENT ME--
HEY! WATCH WHERE YOU POINT THAT--

GUARD MY BACK, MURDOCK.
WHILE I DO... WHAT I MUST.
WHAT THE..
A HEARTBEAT...!

STONE-- I HEARD A HEART-BEAT...
MY BACK, MURDOCK.
I AM IMPERVIOUS-- BUT ONLY WHEN I AM AWARE OF AN ATTACK.
IN ALL THIS SMOKE AND FLAME, I CANNOT--
AHHHGG!
CHAK
IDIOT...
THEY... ARE UPON US!
DAREDEVIL-- HELP ME!
THE WOUND IS DEEP-- EVEN WITH MY STRENGTH, I...
DAREDEVIL...
NO HEARTBEAT NOW... BUT I HEARD ONE...
I DID...

IT WILL NOT WORK, MURDOCK.
YOU ARE NOT TRAINED..
I LOVE YOU, ELEKTRA.
IF THERE'S ANY WAY TO BRING YOU BACK-- I'LL DO IT--
--EVEN IF IT KILLS ME.
...YOU DO NOT KNOW THE WAY...
MURDOCK-- HELP ME--
STICK SAID... IT'S JUST A MATTER...
...OF MOVING ENERGY...
ELEKTRA...
MURDOCK...

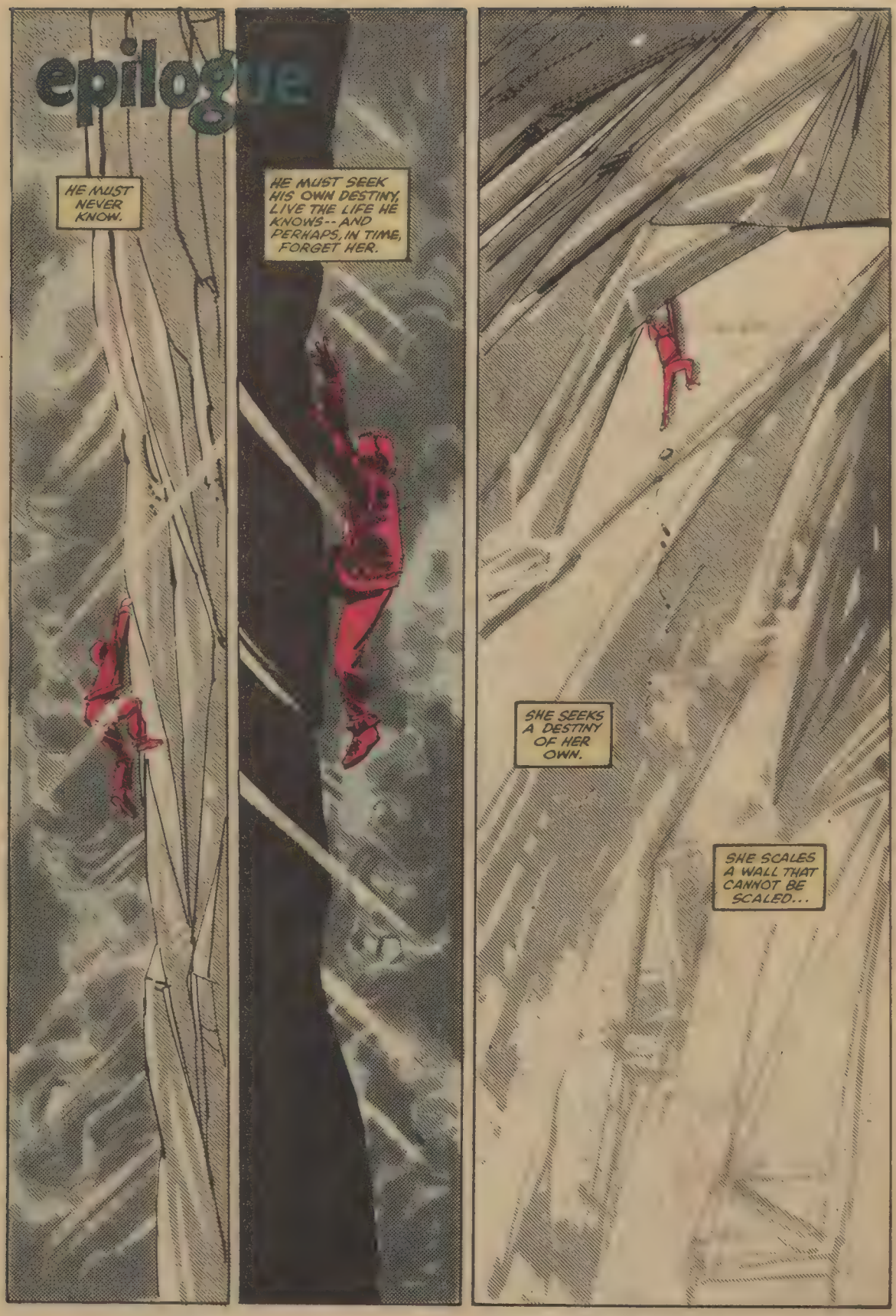
YOUR FRIEND IS FALLEN, STONE.
SOON YOU SHALL FALL, AS WELL...
I COULDN'T DO IT, ELEKTRA.
JUST DON'T KNOW HOW...
I'M SORRY...

BRAKAB
RAKABRA
RAKAB
REMEMBER THE ORDERS, MEN.
ONLY THE BLACK ONES.
KCHOW
HERE'S THE WIDDER. HURT -- BUT ALIVE.
GET HER OUTTA HERE.
ZEKE -- TAKE CARE OF HORNHEAD.
WHAT ABOUT THE BIG ONE?
HE'S ... A FRIEND.
YOU MEN ...WHO SENT YOU?...
WHO ELSE?
THE KINGPIN.
THE KINGPIN...?
BUT WHY...
NASTY CUT YA GOT THERE, PAL. LET'S --
HEY!
LEAVE ME.
OKAY.

FIRE'S SPREADING!
LET'S GO!
AND SO IT ENDS.
WHAT...
...SOMETHING ABOUT HER...
SHE...SHE IS CLEAN!
HOW...
IT WAS MURDOCK.
SOMEHOW IN HIS FUTILE ATTEMPT TO REVIVE HER...
...HE HAS PURGED HER...
SHE IS CLEAN.
AND I...AM WEARY...

CONFUSED, DAREDEVIL?
KINGPIN...
YOU WONDER WHY I SAVED YOUR LIFE, DO YOU NOT?
CONSIDER IT AN *ILLUSTRATION* --OF THE *TRUE NATURE* OF OUR RELATIONSHIP.
YOUR ATTACK ON *INJUN JOE* HAS SERVED TO QUELL A *MUTINY* IN MY ORGANIZATION. IT DEMONSTRATED TO THE MOBS THAT YOU ARE A COMMON ENEMY, AGAINST WHOM THEY NEED *PROTECTION*--
--PROTECTION THAT *I* PROVIDE.
CONSIDER ALSO, DAREDEVIL, THAT WHEN YOU NEEDED TO *FIND* THIS HIDEOUT, YOU DID NOT CONTACT THE *POLICE*.
YOU CAME TO *ME*.
WE *NEED* EACH OTHER, DAREDEVIL. WE ARE *PARTNERS*, AFTER A FASHION.
WE ARE THE *POWER* IN THIS CITY.
MATT-- WHERE'S *STONE*?
I DON'T KNOW. HE...
HE'S STILL IN THE *CHURCH*-- *WOUNDED*--
THE *FIRE*--

I DON'T THINK HE'S IN HERE, NATASHA.
ELEKTRA'S BODY IS GONE. HE MUST'VE TAKEN IT, AND...
I GUESS...HE JUST DID WHAT HE HAD TO DO...
WE ALL DO WHAT WE HAVE TO, MATT.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT REMARK?
NOTHING.
LET'S GO HOME.


epilogue
HE MUST NEVER KNOW.
HE MUST SEEK HIS OWN DESTINY, LIVE THE LIFE HE KNOWS--AND PERHAPS, IN TIME, FORGET HER.
SHE SEEKS A DESTINY OF HER OWN.
SHE SCALES A WALL THAT CANNOT BE SCALED...

DEVIL'S ADVOCATE

℅ MARVEL COMICS GROUP
387 Park Avenue South
New York, New York 10016

DENNIS O'NEIL
EDITOR
RALPH MACCHIO
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Dear Frank and Klaus,

Do you have something against Daredevil's old girlfriends? First Elektra, and now the Black Widow! If you kill her, I'll never forgive you!!!

Albert Lopez
104-29 120 St.
Richmond Hill, NY

Dear Frank and Klaus,

I, for one, will not tolerate you killing off characters like they were going out of style. The Black Widow is a neat character and I was happy that she was coming back, only to find out she's going to die soon because of those little feet spikes. That fans of Black Widow, the fans of Marvel, the fans of comic books will not see her killed off or put out of action like Elektra, Bullseye, and the Punisher.

P.S.: This is not a fan letter, for if this keeps up you won't have any more fans. In Daredevil's own words, "Stop it! Please stop it!".

Anthony Padilla
3701 Oakgreen Ave.
Stillwater, MN 55082

Dear Frank and Klaus,

I will try to be cool but I can't just let you kill off the Black Widow!!!!!!! Look, you people kill off Phoenix (the most foolish and the most stupid thing to do) and you kill off Elektra (I don't know why) and now you're going to kill off the Black Widow!! How could you do it? I mean the poor girl just came out as the new Black Widow and you're just going to kill her off just like that. How could you!!!!

Donald Hackworth
No address given

Dear Frank and Klaus,

Frank, if you let the Black Widow die...!

I'm alright, really I am, but after losing Jean and Elektra, you can't blame me for being nervous. The Black Widow has always held a special place in my heart, and she still, after all these years, remains uncopied and full of potential. So what happens? Fearless Frank Miller gets ahold of her and she starts to dissolve at DD's feet. All right, maybe I'm overreacting —

But, Frank, if you let her die...!

All right, I'll comment on "Widow's Bite." It is very weird seeing Daredevil involved with telepaths, aliens or whatever the heck Stick and his allies are supposed to be. Daredevil's trademark for the past two years has been its realism and streetwise authenticity, and now you're featuring whatsis and whosthats, not to mention your complete changing around of Daredevil's origin. But that I don't mind. In fact, I love that! DD is more interesting and fascinating now than it's ever been before. The only thing I object to is the constant killing off of Matt's girlfriends, 'cept Heather, but you can have her!

So help me, Frank, if you let Natasha die...!

All right! I can't say I'm very pleased about Klaus taking over completely the artistic reins of DD, but if Frank must leave them, I can't think of a better or more natural choice. Still, we're going to lose all the little touches that only a writer-artist could create. But I bet if Klaus was the writer-artist, he wouldn't kill off Agent Romanova!

Frank, Mr. Miller — if she dies...!

AAAARRRRRGGGHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!

Excusé me, I'm going to try to calm down and review my life, my reason for, living, my reason for collecting comics, my reason for reading Daredevil, for ever liking Daredevil, for ever liking Frank Miller...

Stu Krull
28 Kettle Creek Rd
Freehold, NJ 07728

Dear Frank and Klaus,

I have just finished Daredevil #188. I must say it was quite good, and I was extremely pleased to see the Widow so much in evidence. Her dominance of the issue clearly shows her star potential.

I must include, however, that I was quite distraught over the ending. I just don't trust Miller to the point where I'm certain he'll have the Widow live. Of course, the suspense is what he's after (you've succeeded, Frank).

Since I want Natasha to live, I will ensure her survival in my own logical way.

I coach a recreation soccer team. These pre-teen kids can be, how will I say it, over-anxious, boisterous, exuberant, overbearing?

If the Widow doesn't live, I will turn them loose on your offices. They will destroy you instantly.

You will no longer be able to create. No paychecks, no income. Starvation. Death.

It is an inevitable progression.

If you let Miller kill of the Black Widow, it will mean utter destruction of Marvel Comics.

The guilt will be on your heads.

I will unleash my rug-rats!

You have been forewarned.

Fabian Nicieza
124 Throckmorton lane
Old Bridge, NJ 08857

Dear Frank and Klaus,

All the elements are here now for a real tour de force. A stunning reaffirmation of who and what Daredevil is. A pivotal episode that will tie up all these plotlines, re-direct the book, and wipe out that snakepit of old plot devices that cause so much trouble.

But, but, BUT. I really wonder if you're going to pull it off. The temptation to sink into cheap pathos is great and easy to follow. It is HARD to convincingly deal with a person's innermost problems, and yet show the person's true heroism. Particularly when he's not acting very heroic.

All in all, this doesn't look very pleasant. Foggy is angry and suspicious. Heather is pathetic. Natasha is dissolving. The Kingpin ought to wondering what the heck is going on, and ought to be preparing some master counterstroke to even out his losses. All of these have to be dealt with in detail, and all require major resolution.

This is make or break time. We don't want to dangle inconclusively for months on end. We don't want a magic wand to deal with problems a page at a time. We don't want to see these people step out of character to make your job easier. We want a real heroic triumph, or grand tragedy. And, by God, if you choose tragedy, it had better be entertaining tragedy.

So: this stuff if great, but can only remain so if justified by a real slam-bang climax. Anything less will be a grave disappointment. Anything less will do terrible violence to the characters you have developed. And if it's not done right, the whole bit becomes unpleasant, unsavory, and unentertaining. I am worried, but I still trust you.

Do it.

Brian Smith
DIA/CAO
The Pentagon 20301

Dear Frank and Klaus,

Well, well... an entire issue in which DD doesn't BOP! THWOP! or WHUD! anyone, leap anywhere (SPROING!), or knock anybody through a plate glass window (KRESHH!).

An interesting "build up" issue — but come on, you guys! For some time now, you've been telling us what a master-slayer this "deathless" Kirigi is; and last issue's resurrection sequence did have some moments of cold grue and supernatural menace. Yet, with the exception of three of Hand's own henchmen plus a wino, Kirigi really hasn't shown much martial skill — except perhaps at surviving impalement, truck-smashing, barbecueing, and decapitation.

The isolation tank scenes were well-handled, especially the close shots between Stick and his student, and the chillingly effective use of the blank panels. Once again, Frank, you've broken new ground and taken Matt even farther from his cliché origin.

After a somewhat shaky start (the Widow fight), Klaus' mastery reasserted itself; the cliffhanger last page was a masterpiece — by that time both Klaus and the Widow were smokin'.

Counting down to the next issue — 29 days, 28, 27...

John Pocsik
No address given

NEXT: ROULLETTE

BULLPEN BULLETINS

A COUPLE OF THINGS WENT WRONG LAST MONTH...

First, I was so late with the Bullpen Bulletins manuscript that a number of Marvel Comics had to be printed and shipped without it! An ad was inserted in its place at the printer's.

Second, when the Bullpen Page finally got done, it was *so* late that I couldn't take the time to check it over properly before it went out. As a result, a photo of the Marvel folks in attendance at the wedding of star writer Roger Stern and lovely Carmela Merlo was printed *half* the size I'd intended, and therefore looked a lot like mud.

HERE'S WHY!

Last month I was on the road for almost three weeks, attending the spectacular San Diego Convention in sunny southern California, and the incredible Chicago Con in the wonderful Windy City. I took my briefcase and a large portfolio, both full of work, along with me... but while I was in San Diego – I admit it – I succumbed to temptation. I spent two whole days plus a stolen afternoon or three relaxing. I played raquetball and lifted weights at the hotel's health spa, I went swimming in the hotel pool, jogging along the scenic waterfront, body surfing at the beach, and partying far into the night. I was joined in these thoroughly irresponsible activities by some of my favorite people – Joe Rubinstein, Jim Starlin and his wife Daina Grazlunas, Bill Sienkiewicz, John Byrne and his wife Andrea, Carl Potts and Christie Scheele. It was wonderful – the nearest thing I've had to a vacation in about seven years.

The price for those couple of days off was high. The Bullpen Bulletins did not appear in a number of Marvel titles, and where it did, the photo it carried was naught but a blur. My fault. All my fault.

WHAT'S BEING DONE...

Well, I've already arranged for several of your favorite Marvel personalities to do *guest columns* which will appear on this page every once in a while when I think you folks out there need a change of pace – or when I'm in a jam! Also, I'm going to print *another* picture of Roger and Carmela when I run his guest column. Also, they made me give back my salary for last month...

OKAY, ON WITH NEW BUSINESS!

Did anyone *not* see the nifty, sixteen-page Marvel Comics Guide to Comic Collecting which was included in every single copy of *The Amazing Spider-Man* #234? From the response we received it's the most popular bonus feature ever offered in a comic book! If you somehow missed it, head for (or write to) the comics specialty shop nearest you. Many of them ordered a bunch of extra copies of *Spider-Man* #234 and of the Guide by itself, and they may still have a few left. If you don't know of any comics specialty shops near you, check the ads in this comic! Many shops and distributors advertise in Marvel publications. Or, write to me. I'll get back to you with a list of shops in your general area. Speaking of such shops, I'd like to thank the folks from SUNSHINE COMICS, located at 6370 BIRD ROAD, SOUTH MIAMI, FLORIDA 33155 for their help and cooperation, without which we couldn't have published the Collector's Guide. They originated the guide, and did hundreds of thousands of collectors across the country a service by allowing us to publish and widely distribute it. Thanks, folks!

MARVEL TROUNCES WARREN!

Thought you'd like to know that on August 3, 1982 the Bullpen Bombers trashed the Warren Warriors on the softball field by a score of 20 – 1. Our left-fielder and manager Robbie Carosella led the attack with five hits in six at bats, including two homers.

Here's the line-up:

RF –Archie Goodwin, Editorial Director of *EPIC* – 4 for 6; LF –Robbie Carosella, Photostat Operator – 5 for 6; SS –Harry Eisenstein, Mail Clerk – 0 for 5 (but brilliant in the field); 1B –Jim Shooter, Editor-in-Chief – 2 for 5; CF –Ken Fedunewicz, Special Projects Production – 2 for 5; 3B –Nel Yomtov, Merchandising Development – 4 for 5; P –John Morelli, Letterer/Correctionist – 4 for 5; 2B –Lance Tooks, Assistant Editor – 4 for 5; SC –Ken Lopez, Production Assistant – 2 for 5

We had 'em all the way!

I HAVE TO MENTION...

...that in San Diego, at their annual awards banquet, our own Archie Goodwin, Editorial Director of *EPIC Illustrated Magazine*, was honored with the prestigious Inkpot Award, acknowledging his contribution to the comics industry. If you want to see one reason why, buy or borrow a copy of *EPIC*. It'll convince you. A bunch of other Marvel folks have received Inkpots as well over the years. I'll run a complete list here sometime soon.

A WEEK LATER...

...in Chicago, at the Con, disaster nearly struck! You see *Spider-Man* was there, live and in person to give away free copies of the latest issues of *The Amazing Spider-Man* to the fans in attendance. The trouble was the shipment of comics never arrived! Fortunately, yours truly happened to bump into old Webhead in his hour of need, and I just happened to be carrying a hundred or so coupons, each good for a free subscription to any Marvel title. I promptly turned the coupons over to our hero, who found them an extremely effective substitute for his missing freebie comics. No problem. Now he owes me one. Just goes to show you, the Boy Scouts are right. Always be prepared.

IT'S ABOUT TIME...

...that I gave Eliot Brown some credit. He's the guy who typesets this thing (and almost every *other* thing) every month... and he does a darn good job, and we're grateful. But, typesetting isn't his *only* trick. He's also our resident photographer. He took the stunning photo which graced the cover of *Dazzler* #21 – as well as most of the other photos that have appeared in Marvel Comics in recent years. If a photo isn't credited otherwise, chances are it's Eliot's work. I should mention, too, that Eliot is our resident technical expert. If something's broken, he can fix it – if something's complicated, he can explain it – if you've got a problem, he can solve it. He draws – and he's especially good at technical drawing, like blueprints, diagrams, cutaways, mechanical drawing – he inks, he colors, he designs, he does boardwork, and other stuff, too, that I can't think of. Best of all, he's a real trouper who's stayed here at the office all night many times helping desperate artists and editors make deadlines. He's probably blushing now, as he typesets this – he's such a humble guy!

Well, Jim, I just don't know what to say, but I think that I'd like to take this singular opportunity to thank all the little people whose coattails I've ridden; when I think of Marvel Comics, the image of selfless comraderie almost, almost brings a tear to my eye, the hours of bonhommie, shoulder to shoulder... I can't go on – well, yes I could, but Jim is sliding his forefinger across his throat. Hmm. Thanks, Jim. Eliot R. Brown

But I couldn't pass this opportunity to let him know he's appreciated! Hooray, Eliot!

CONGRATULATIONS...

...are in order for my former secretary Franki Sienkiewicz. Being my secretary has got to be the toughest job in the place (tied, maybe, with the Traffic Manager job, which Virginia Romita handles so well!). It involves representing Marvel to the world and the freelancers, handling an enormous workload including tons of memos, letters and complicated projects, *all* of them urgent and important, supervising three or more office assistants and putting up with me. Franki took it all in stride – so well, in fact, that she received an impressive promotion. She's now *Administrative Manager of International Licensing*. Whew! I feel like I should *salute* even when I just write that title! I think what it means is, that she's in charge of Europe... or maybe just NATO.

Congratulations, Franki!

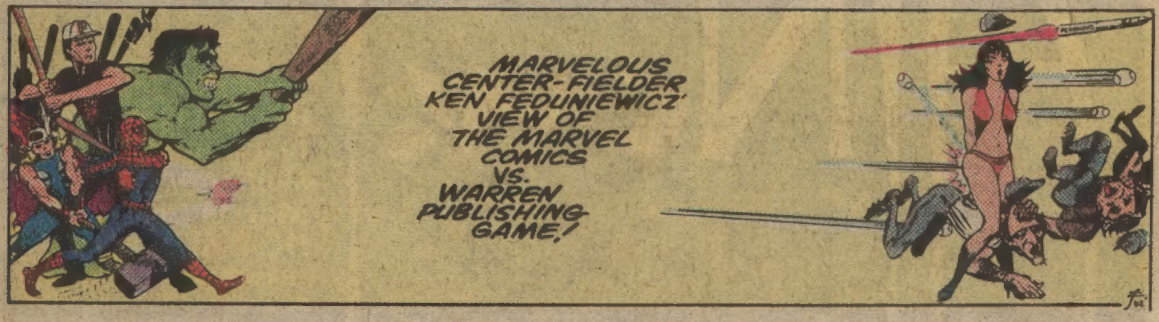
MY NEW SECRETARY...

Pardon me, my new *Administrative Assistant* – the job grew a lot while Franki had it, because she was always eagerly shouldering more responsibility, so we had to change the title – is Lea Sapp. Lea is doing a great job and is already making me forget about ol' whatsername. Heh, heh. Just kidding, Franki.

GOTTA GO!

I think I see some NATO bombers headed this way!

Best,



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